DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 088 584 PS 007 131

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TITLE	A Crosscultural Analysis of the Child Care System.
INSTITUTION	Russell Sage Foundation, New York, N.Y.
SPONS AGENCY	Office of Child Development (DHEW), Washington, D.C.
REPORT NO	OCD-CB-227
PUB DATE	Oct 73
NOTE	104p.
EDRS PRICE	MF-$0.75 HC-$5.40
DESCRIPTORS	Child Care Workers; *Child Rearing; *Cross Cultural Studies; *Day Care Services; Educational Sociology; Family Life; Federal Aid; *Social Change; *Social Problems; Socioeconomic Influences; Working Women
IDENTIFIERS	China; Israel; Sweden; United States

ABSTRACT

This paper reports on a 1-year cross-cultural project designed to compare alternative modes of child care and child care programs in Sweden, Israel, and China with those in the United States. Based upon data available in documents pertaining to children, interviews with scholars involved in research on child care programs, and on-site observations at child care settings in Israel, Sweden, and the United States, this paper attempts to formulate a thesis on the kinds of social environments and interpersonal relationships which are most conducive to learning and academic achievement. Data has been compiled and discussed according to three major topics: role of the child, role of the parent, and role of the caretaker. The most general conclusion that can be drawn about the child care systems, in the United States and elsewhere, is that they are not providing enough of the kinds of care children need most. A second observation is that increased attention and concern in the United States should be paid to the discontinuities between our values and our behavior with respect to children. (CS)

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A Crosscultural Analysis of the Child Care System

by

Sarane Spence Boocock

Russell Sage Foundation

New York

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A report of research supported by U.S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, Office of Child Development Grant No. OCD-CB-227

October, 1973

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Acknowledgements

This study was performed with the support of a grant from the Office of Child Development, United States Department of Health, Education, and Welfare (Grant Number OCD - CB - 227).

Travel to Israel was made possible by my appointment as a Visiting Professor at the Hebrew University, Jerusalem, for the spring, 1973 term. Travel to Sweden was supported by honoraria for a series of lectures given at the Unitersities of Stockholm and Göteborg.

My study of children and child care in China was facilitated by my participation in a research team, funded by the Russell Sage Foundation, under the direction of Urie Bronfenbrenner, Cornell University, and David A. Goslin, Russell Sage Foundation. Project activities have included a two-day meeting, in February 1973, during which the team decided upon their general topics of inquiry and discussed the types of environments in which study of children would be most valuable, and an extensive review of the literature on childrearing and education in China.

The Russell Sage Foundation has also provided me with an office and secretarial assistance since the beginning of this research project, and has covered a portion of the expenses for paper and telephone calls.

Two persons who worked with me deserve special acknowledgement. Laura Starr, my research assistant at Hebrew University, arranged my

interviews and field visits in Israel, acted as an interpreter during my visits to day care centers and schools, reviewed much of the literature on child care in Israel (which involved translating a number of documents from Hebrew to English), and generally helped me to experience Israeli life and society. Vivian Kaufman, my secretary at the Russell Sage Foundation, not only edited and typed this report, but also established most of the contacts with resource people in the New York City area, located major libraries and other sources of child care, information and did vast amounts of literature reviewing. I thank them for their intellectual contribution, for their long hours of work, and for their unfailing good humor under the time pressures imposed by a project of this sort.

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The demand for child services is based upon fundamental long-term changes in the functioning of society, the composition of the labor force, the roles of women and men, and changes in family life. Forceful economic and political realities underlie the marked rise in demand for child care services. They will not go away (Rowe et al, 1972).

As it stands, the needs of children, are parcelled out among a hopeless confusion of agencies with diverse objectives, conflicting jurisdictions, and imperfect channels of communication. The school, the health department, the churches, welfare services, youth organizations, the medical profession, libraries, the police, recreation programs -- all of these see the children of the community at one time or another, but no one of them is concerned with the total pattern of life for children in the community (Bronfenbrenner, 1970: 164).

The question that faces us today is not whether the nation will have child care, but whether it will have horrendous, adequate, or excellent care (Roby, 1973).

This paper reports on a one-year project designed to explore the role of the child in this society and others, and to consider alternative modes of child care and child care programs. It is based upon analysis of data and documents pertaining to children and child care programs, and upon visits to two countries -- and preparation for a visit to a third -- which have been relatively innovative with respect to child care. Both in the United States and abroad, the study of available data and published work was supplemented by interviews with scholars, government officials and other persons engaged in research on and development of children's programs, and visits to a variety of settings where children are found, from day care centers and schools to parks and shopping centers.

Background and Research Activities

The project reported here grew out of my previous work on the kinds of social environments and interpersonal relationships which are most conducive to learning and academic achievement (Boocock, 1972 and 1973). One of the conclusions of this work was that factors and experiences outside of the school had such an overwhelming effect on children's success in school, that serious attention should be given to the whole range of settings in which children spend their time and to the institutions which socialize children or otherwise affect their lives. Also exploratory analysis of some disturbing trends concerning American children, including evidence of the widespread incidence of physical

abuse, increasing rates of illegitimacy and its accompanying problems, and increases in the numbers of children without adult supervision for long periods of time has led me to believe that the insufficiency of adequate care for young children has reached crisis proportions in this country.

During the past year, I spent one month in Sweden and three and a half months in Israel. In both countries I attempted to gather as comprehensive a picture of the lives of children as was possible in the limited time available. My research activities included:

- interviews with government officials and other persons who have developed and/or administered child care programs;
- collection of statistical data and research reports on children and children's programs;
- discussion with scholars engaged in research on children;
- visits to day care centers, schools, playgrounds, stores and shopping centers, new kinds of residential settings (including new towns in Sweden, kibbutzim and development towns in Israel), and other settings where children are found in large numbers.

(A full listing of sites visited and persons interviewed is given in Appendix A.)

In this country, a similar assembling of information on children's lives and problems is being carried out. This has included:

- establishing contact with agencies, mainly in New York City, which deal with children, to determine what services are offered and what kinds of information are routinely collected;
- consultation with demographers and opinion research organizations concerning the use of census data and other large surveys which may contain items relevant to this project;
- visits to libraries with special collections on day care programs, neglect and abuse of children, etc.;
- exploration of what, if anything, some of the major employers of parents (large corporations, labor unions, government agencies) are doing to provide day care and other services to the children of their employees;
- visits to a few selected sites in the United States which provide child care based upon a truly innovative view of children (e.g., the Synanon communities in California).

One of the countries proposed for study in my proposal was mainland China, since information which has recently become available on childrearing practices and education in China indicates that, although many practices and policies are an integral part of a political system and accompanying ideology that is antithetical to that of the United States, a great deal of progress has been made in solving problems of growing concern in this country, including large-scale day care of young children. In the winter of 1973, a two-year project for the purpose of

enabling a research team, headed by Urie Bronfenbrenner, Cornell University and David A. Goslin, Russell Sage Foundation, and composed of experts in the sociology of education, socialization, and child development, to make two visits to mainland China and to provide for supporting scholarly activities in the United States was funded by Russell Sage Foundation. I was invited to be a member of this research team, so during the past year, I have had more opportunity than I expected to acquire background information on this society.*

*
The methods of data gathering and analysis used in this project are discussed more fully in Appendix B.

In the original proposal to the Office of Child Development, I proposed to spend a semester in Sweden, with a short visit to either Israel or Hong Kong. My travel plans changed somewhat, because (1) of the invitation I received to spend a term at Hebrew University as a visiting professor, and (2) of the opportunity to join the Russell Sage Foundation China project, with the ultimate possibility of studying mainland Chinese children at first hand instead of as a China-watcher in Hong Kong. These shifts in my travel did not affect the budget for this project in any way.

The Role of the Child

The focal role -- or the purpose -- of the system under study is, of course, the child. How a society treats its children depends upon its views of what children are like as well as what is perceived as necessary for the smooth functioning of the society itself. As one historical observer has put it: "Children can be thought of as vessels to be filled, animals to be restrained, plants to be encouraged, or simply as adults in the process of becoming" (Larrabee, 1960:199). Aries' classic study, Centuries of Childhood, makes clear that our current views have not always been the prevailing ones, even in Western culture. Indeed the very notion of childhood as a meaningfully distinct phase in the life cycle is a relatively recent conceptualization.

A review of various periods of American history reveals important changes in the view of the child. In the early days of our country, all able-bodied persons constituted a much-needed source of labor, and each additional child born into a family represented an additional hand with the harvest or insurance of future support for a parent. If parents did not have an immediate need for the child's labor, there was usually a relative or acquaintance who did. In a society in which idleness was a sin, the ideal model of child rearing included a period of apprenticeship or indentured labor, a system involving at least a quasi-legal contract between a child's parents and the head of the household in which he was placed. The child would be taught the craft or trade of his "employer" and would receive room and board, in return for assistance in the workshop and home (often including help in caring

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for the younger children of the household). Apprenticeship contracts often stipulated behavioral requirements -- e.g., it would be agreed that the apprentice would not dance, play cards, gamble or engage in any other kinds of activities which would reflect unfavorably upon his employer (Handlin and Handlin, 1971; Hawes, 1971).

The growth of industrialized cities in the post Civil War period brought the first recognition of the special needs of children. Accounts of the period include descriptions of swarms of unattended, often homeless children roaming the streets of New York and other cities. Some were fully employed -- The Newsboy, Ragged Dick, and other best-selling novels of the period romanticized the adventures and ultimate worldly success of newspaper and shoeshine boys, and there were boarding houses in large cities for some of these "independent little dealers," financed completely by their earnings -- but many more children survived by begging and stealing (Hawes, 1971: 91 ff). It was, indeed, the visibility of homeless, mistreated and delinquent children, along with the new framework and set of analytical tools for defining social problems provided by the rise of social science in the United States which led to child labor laws, compulsory school attendance, and the creation of agencies and institutions devoted to the protection of children (e.g., the Children's Aid Society; the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children, and juvenile courts). Children's needs, however, were still subordinated to those of adults and of society as a whole.

During the twentiety century, the elaboration of childhood as a special period has continued unabated. Perhaps the time of greatest child-centerdness in this country was during the two decades following the end of World War II. Among the special characteristics of this period were the proliferation of experts and expertise on child development and child rearing (as epitomized by the ubiquitous Dr. Spock, whose basic handbook, Baby and Child Care, is a best seller second only to the Bible). The literature of this period has certain common themes. (1) Children need the devoted and full time attention of their biological mothers. Otherwise they will suffer from "deprivation" and their later emotional growth will be stunted. As Bowlby, the most influential proponent of the theory has put it, "when deprived of maternal care, the child's development is almost always retarded -- physically, intellectually and socially" (Bowlby, 1952:15). (2) The first five years of life are also the time of greatest cognitive growth, a finding emerging out of the influential work of Piaget and leading to everything from the current emphasis upon pressure for preschool education to the growing market for educational toys, books, and kits telling parents how to teach their babies to read.
(3) Children are fun. An analysis of publications of the Children's Bureau over several decades has shown the emergence of a "fun morality"

in connection with child rearing, which argues that not only are parents supposed to provide for their children's physical and emotional needs, but they are also supposed to enjoy the process (Wolfenstein, 1951).

A second characteristic of the period of child-centerdness was the separation of children and childhood from the workaday life of the larger society. The American child is not expected to make any real contribution to the working of the community, a quality which they share to a large degree with urbanized Scandinavian and British children but which distinguishes them from such contemporary societies as Israel, where kibbutz children tend gardens and animals from a very early age and elementary school children in Jerusalem took on such community responsibilities as mail delivery and garbage collection during the Six Day War (de Shalit, 1970); or mainland China, where elementary school workshops turn out machine components for buses and other heavy equipment, and all school children spend a month-and-a half a year in some form of productive labor (Committee of Concerned Asian Scholars, 1972; Munro, 1971).

Somewhere in the 1960's was another important turning point in the role of the child. By the present decade there was accumulating evidence that many children are not being adequately cared for. While much of the information necessary to assess the system of child care in this country has not been systematically collected and analyzed, there are a number of empirical indicators of child neglect and abuse. Among the more disturbing kinds of evidence

are the widespread incidence of physical abuse, increasing rates of illegitimacy, and increases in the number of children without adult supervision for long periods of time.

The actual size of the child abuse problem remains a mystery. Some 60,000 cases a year are reported in the United States, though it is felt that many cases, especially in middle and upper-class homes, go unreported. A 1964 study of California children concluded that about 20,000 were in need of protective services. A study of Denver, Colorado showed that in a sample year, approximately 100 cases were referred monthly to the Welfare Department for services resulting from serious physical abuse (Zalba, 1971). Hospital emergency room studies indicate that possibly ten per cent of children who are treated for accidents are actually victims of maltreatment (Day Care Council of New York, 1972:7). A survey of New York City children concluded that at least 1% of the deaths of children under age six were caused by parental abuse, and some pediatricians interviewed believed that "if the true statistics were known, child abuse would be the most common cause of death in children" (Day Care Council of New York, 1972: 8).

The rates of out-of-wedlock births have increased in the United States, especially among the youngest females of childbearing age, at the same time that legal abortion is becoming increasingly available (White House Conference on Children, 1970: 54). An especially disturbing trend in pacesetting areas of the country, such as southern California, is the increase in multiple pregnancies among

unmarried high school girls, more of whom elect to keep their babies than was formerly the case among unmarried mothers (Cottman, 1971). Illegitimacy per se does not guarantee inadequate care. However, except in the few societies where concerted efforts have been made to remove the stigma of illegitimacy and to assure that all children have access to necessary services (e.g., Sweden -- see Linner, 1967), children of unmarried mothers too often spend the first years of life in settings characterized by uninformed and desultory care.

Many children who escape physical abuse suffer from serious neglect. Indicators of neglect take a variety of forms. There have been increases in the number of divorce cases in which neither parent wants custody of the children OTTO, 1973).

There are clues that many children ostensibly in the care of their own parents are in fact, left without care for long periods of time. This kind of information is difficult to obtain, since few parents willingly admit to leaving young children unattended. A 1966 Swedish study found some 3,000 children under seven years of age left unsupervised while their parents were at work (Roby, 1973: 308). In this country testimony at recent federal and state hearings, including statements by working class women who left ill preschoolers unattended in locked apartments because they feared losing their jobs if they stayed home with them (California Commission on the Status of Women, 1968), indicate that the number of young children left alone or in the care of only-slightly-older children runs, on any given day, into the hundreds of thousands.

What constitutes neglect of a child is still not clearly defined. While pre-school children left alone in an apartment while their parents are at work are obvious cases of neglect, more general if subtle trends suggest that our entire society may be becoming less child-oriented. Time studies indicate that Americans are spending less time in child care than they did in the past and less than in other countries for which time data are available (Robinson and Converse, 1972. Ironically, American women are spending more time than ever on housework, but large amounts of this time are devoted to the care and repair of "time-saving" appliances and to the shopping that is an important component of a consumption-oriented society. Moreover, a large chunk of many mothers' "child-care" time is spent in chauffering their children, a setting which may be dynamic but is scarcely conducive to satisfying parent-child interaction). Although I have not discovered any comprehensive studies of how much and how parent-child time is actually spent, some informants (e.g., Rowe, 1973; Barbara Finberg, personal communication) estimate that even non-gainfully-employed mothers may spend as little as fifteen or twenty minutes a day in actual communication with their pre-school children and that many children have no other daily meaningful contact with adults.

Part of the apparent increases in child abuse and neglect may be due to fuller reporting and to changes in the law. For example, changes in the libel laws make it less risky for pediatricians, social workers, and neighbors to report cases of possible child abuse. Recent work by historians also suggests that mistreatment of children may have been even more widespread in the past, in the United States and

elsewhere. Moreover, there can be honest differences of opinion in a pluralistic society about the best way to care for young children. Granting all of these possible qualifications, it still seems clear: (a) that American children's problems are, if anything, still underreported (partly because children rarely earn income and pay taxes, cannot vote, and have few legal rights, and are thus in a sense invisible); and (b) that the insufficiency of adequate care for young children is of a magnitude that no civilized society should tolerate.

While the care of young children is not totally satisfactory in any society, the current "crisis" seems to be the result of a combination of social trends unique to modern industrialized societies, of which the following seem to be the major ones:

1) Changes in the structure of households. There have been several recent studies of households in the past (Aries, 1962; Hunt, 1970; Laslett, 1972) which indicate that they used to be considerably larger and to be characterized by a greater diffusion of responsibility in certain key respects (in particular the sharing of child care by a greater number of persons). The three-generation model that we tend to romanticize in our present dilemma was never as common as most people think, partly because until recent times, few people lived long enough to form long-term three generation groups, and partly because with the exception of a few atypical periods in history, the aged have normally been considered a burden to their young relatives. Moreover, the three-generation family, where it did exist (e.g., among the wealthy in pre-Communist China) was a stifling environment for many of its members (females and the young in particular). What households of the

past were more likely to contain were apprentices, servants, and other persons not necessarily related by blood. They were also more likely to contain the male head of the household for longer periods of time, since his work was often in or near the home.

Thus, while homes in the past were not consciously organized for the care of young children -- in fact, children were less likely to be considered full human beings worthy of love and care than they are now (Aries, 1962) -- the economic and other functions of the family necessitated an organization which, at the same time, assured that a number of persons were available to share in looking after little children.

2) Changes in sex roles which downgrade parenthood and child rearing. The role of the mother and father will be the subject of the next section of this report. However, it should be noted in this section that one of the trends which has most affected children's lives is that the adult role which has been most responsible for the care of children is now in conflict with other adult roles which may offer more gratifications. The effect upon children of the women's liberation movement and other social trends affecting sex roles also underscores the interrelatedness of the role system involved in child care, in that a change in any of the major system roles has repercussions on the others.

3) Loss of child care options outside the family. Historians are just beginning to clarify the way children were raised in the past, but several recent studies (for example, Hunt, 1970) suggest that surprisingly many of them were raised or spent large amounts of time with adults

other than their natural parents. In wealthy families in both Europe and the Orient, the pattern from medieval times until well into the 18th century was a kind of exchange of children, such that children at a very early age were sent to live with another family, whom they "served" until adulthood, and sometimes after. The American apprenticeship system has already been mentioned. The custom of sending off unwanted children to farms on the western frontier, originally a largely within-family arrangement, was continued on a non-familial basis by 19th century reformers and organizations -- for example, Charles Loring Brace's "placing-out" system, one of the programs of the New York Children's Aid Society which he founded (Hawes, 1971: Chapter 5).

Thus it may be that the real change in our society is that with the close of the frontier, the decrease in the proportion of the population engaged in farming, and the enactment of compulsory education and child labor laws, the difficulties of raising children have simply become more visible.

4. A serious imbalance in the supply and demand for child care. This seems to be one of the largest unrecognized problems in modern societies. During the past year, I have observed day care centers and nursery schools in the United States, Sweden, and Israel. In each country, some of my visits were on registration days (often for enrollment a year in advance). In every case, all places were filled within a few hours of the opening of registration. Mothers often waited in line throughout the preceeding night in hopes of ensuring a place for their children, and directors were confronted with pleading and

often tearful or hysterical women, begging them to allow their children to be enrolled. Day care administrators, government officials, and researchers I talked with agreed that any new facilities opened within the next few years would be immediately filled -- and would still not meet the current demand. While no country seems to have accurate figures on the exact number of children in need of care or the exact number and type of places available, the most responsible estimates in Sweden (Rosengren, 1973) and the U.S. (Roby, 1973; Featherstone, 1970) are that places at centers or homes with any kind of governmental licensing or approval are available for no more than 20% of the children who need them (i.e., whose parents are gainfully employed -- this does not even include families who would like and possibly use day care if it were available, including large numbers of women who would prefer to work but have no one to look after their children). Of the nations reviewed in Roby's recent volume on child care (1973), only in the Soviet Union did the observer encounter no families who were having difficulty in enrolling children in a preschool program and no waiting lists for such schools.

Among the unfortunate consequences of the short supply of child care are high levels of anxiety and dissatisfaction among many parents (as the last director of OCD has put it, we have no idea how many American women's lives have been warped by their inability to get any kind of relief from the 24-hour-a-day care of young children. Edward Zigler, quoted in Orth, 1973) and recourse to <u>proteksia</u> (Israeli term for political privilege or pull) and dishonesty to circumvent rules or

priorities (e.g., in Sweden, many married couples claim to be unmarried since unwed mothers have first choice at government subsidized day care centers).

5. The costliness of children. Raising children has always been hard work, a fact that often seems to be overlooked in contemporary advice to parents. What is different now is that the costs have gone up steeply relative to the rewards, and that parents and potential parents have more, and often more attractive, options for investment of their time and energies. Some elaboration of these two points:

First, children in America are a big expense. In the early years of this country, each additional child born into a family represented an additional hand with the harvest or additional insurance of future support for a parent. By contrast, a child is now a large cost both to his parents and to the community. A recent study which translated this trend into dollars and cents estimated that the cost of raising one child in the U.S. to age 18 is $34,464 ($98,361 if one adds a college education and an estimate of the wages the mother "lost" by taking care of a child instead of holding a paying job). The study concludes: "Having a child will not only mean giving up one life style for another, but also potentially giving up one standard of living for another" (Commission on Population Growth and the American Future, 1971).

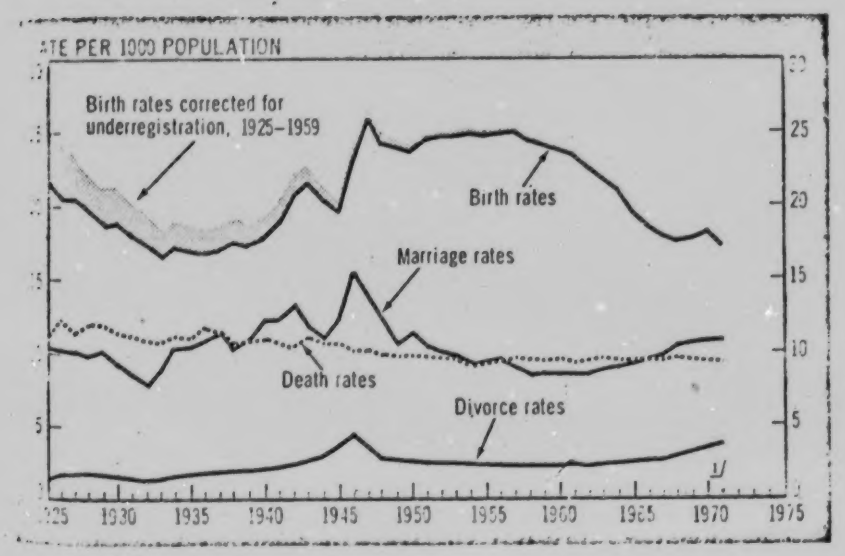
Second, caring for young children illustrates what I call the Persian Rug theory, which says that when people have more attractive and easier ways to spend their time, they tend to choose these alternatives. Crafts like rug-making, which require years of training and back-breaking labor,

and which pay exploitatively low wages to the actual craftsmen, are dying out as jobs offering both higher wages and less exacting work have become more available. The care of young children is, likewise, an extremely time-consuming and difficult job, and in no society that I know of has it ever paid well, in money or esteem. As in the case of rug-making, when people have the opportunity to do something else, they often take it (as is the case of women doing the blandest kind of office work for pay that is just a little more than they need to pay someone else to look after their children).

Thus, the position of children in American society is at best an ambiguous one. It is clear that the traditional reasons for wanting children -- i.e., for economic reasons or to extend the family line or family name -- have all but disappeared in modern secularized societies. It has been argued that as children have lost their economic and familial value to parents, they have become more valued in a qualitative sense, as they provide adults with personal experiences and pleasure of a unique sort (Berelson, 1972). Evaluation of this argument requires an understanding of some very complex demographic trends as well as weighing of what little survey data are available on the subject. It does seem that there is less wanting of children among Americans than in the past and that those who do want children want fewer of them. As Figure 1 shows, birth rates have fluctuated considerably during the past half century. Until recently, they have been correlated with business conditions and the state of the economy, with the lowest rates (until 1972) during the depression and the highest during the affluent decade and a half following World War II. The steep decline during the past few years was, however, unprecedented and unpredicted.

Figure 1

Vital Statistics Rates: 1925 to 1971



1 Birth and death rates for 1969, and all data for 1970 and 1971, preliminary. Source: Chart prepared by U.S. Bureau of the Census. Data from U.S. Public Health Service.

By the end of 1972, the fertility of American women dropped below the low point in the mid-1930's (in the depths of the Depression) and below the "replacement" rate of 2.11 children per woman (the figure is slightly over two in order to compensate for women who bear no children). In this year alone, there were 9% fewer births than in the previous year, even though there were 2% more women of childbearing age (Kahn, 1973). While some of the decline may be explained by a prior trend toward younger marriage and child-bearing, such that women who have reached the older childbearing ages concentrated their childbearing in the early years of marriage and are now having relatively few children (Campbell et al., 1969: 177ff). But this does not account for the substantial decreases in fertility among younger women, who seem to have made a distinct move away from marriage as well as motherhood. As one participant in a 1969 conference on transition in family structures concluded, the low birth rates in the 1930's involved not a rejection of family life but a separation between "family as marital relation and family as reproductive institution. . . There was no rejection of the family; there was a rejection of parenthood" (Campbell et al., 1969: 51). By contrast, in 1970, 45% of the women under age 35 were single.

Another distinctive feature of the very recent decline in birth rates is that the decreased desire for children cuts across all subgroups of American women:

> "In a motley nation, one finds an unusual homogeneity of attitude among women against big families, and, for all anyone can tell, this may be their permanent position, and business cycles be hanged -- for the desire to reduce family sizes has clearly been shared by all fertile women,

> whatever their region, education, age, race, or color. It may be especially significant that the birthrate for poor and near-poor women -- who, with less education and less access to reliable contraceptives and to abortions, might be expected to lag behind their better-situated sisters -- has actually been going down the fastest" (Kahn, 1973: 151-152).

Surveys asking about desire for children and how many children are wanted reflect changing fertility rates to some degree. For example, the proportions favoring childlessness were higher during the Depression than during the post World War II period. However, survey results or interpretation of them, may lag behind actual changes in fertility, since studies as late as 1970 reported widespread desire for children in the United States, and fewer than 1% of the respondents in favor of having no children or only one child (Hoffman and Hoffman, 1973: 22 ff.). There is also considerable evidence that many children were unwanted by their parents. Data assembled for the 1970 White House Conference on children showed that almost 60% of married women reported that they had had more pregnancies or had become pregnant earlier in their marriages than they wanted (White House Conference on Children, 1970: 42). The Commission on Population Growth reported that 15% of all children born to married women between 1966 and 1970 (some 2,650,000 children) had been unwanted (Kahn, 1973: 150).

Crosscultural comparisons are difficult to make, since birth and fertility rates are affected by a variety of factors, including population policies, labor force and other economic trends, and marriage and family laws, as well as by the number and proportion of people of marriagable and childbearing ages. Table 1 gives some idea of the great variations

between societies. While dropping sharply, the U.S. birth rate has still not reached the level of Sweden, whose birth rate was the world's lowest for several years after World War II (Leijon, 1968) and which has a current fertility rate of only 1.7 children per family. Sweden also has one of the world's lowest marriage rates -- it was the only country of the ones I studied in which marriage rates are declining (United Nations Statistical Yearbook, 1971: Table 35). Because so many Swedish children are born out of wedlock, or to parents who marry after pregnancy or birth of a child, Sweden has developed a national policy that no child shall be deprived of legal rights or social benefits because of the circumstances of their birth (in fact, children of single or unmarried parents are given preference in state-subsidized day care programs).

Israel has a higher birth rate than Sweden or the United States, which is encouraged in a society which has a great need for people, to settle, develop and defend an underdeveloped land surrounded by enemies. In fact, a special council was established in the Demographic Center, in the Prime Minister's office, in 1968, to evolve a policy and services aimed at reversing the declining birth rate which had begun in Israel in the 1950's (Harman, 1969). By contrast, China, which has the highest birth rate in Table 1, is in the midst of a massive nationwide effort to reduce the birth rate, by encouraging later marriages and smaller families and by providing abortions, sterilizations, and vasectomies on demand. By all reports this campaign has had extraordinary results. One observer reported that the birth rate in the Peking area dropped from 43.4 per 1,000 in 1962 to 17.8 in 1972, and predicted that annual population growth would come

Table 1

Birth Rates - United States and Selected Countries

1970

	Crude birth rate per 100
U.S.	18.2
Sweden	13.6
Israel	26.8
Mainland China*	33.1
Japan	18.8

Source: United Nations Statistical Yearbook, 1971.

* Estimate prepared by U.N. Population Division for 1965-70.

down almost to 1% in the next decade (Han Suyin, presentation reported in the New York Times, September 16, 1973).

What these comparisons indicate is that while birth and fertility rates reflect a society's attitudes toward children, as well as its need for them, the complexity of the variables which affect birth rates precludes simple conclusions. We still know very little about people's reasons for wanting -- or not wanting -- children, nor do we know much about their attitudes and behavior toward the children they have. (For a more detailed discussion of the reasons for which children may be valued, and the methodological issues involved in measuring the value of children, see Hoffman and Hoffman, 1973. Research now in progress by James Fawcett, in which couples in six Asian countries will be interviewed about their perceived value of their children, should give new insights into crosscultural differences in attitudes and beliefs about child-bearing and child-rearing.)

The Role of the Parent

In the previous chapter, we described some basic changes occurring in the child's position in American society. It is equally clear that the role of the American parent is undergoing radical and irrevocable changes.

It is difficult to construct an image of the "traditional" role of the parent unbiased by analysts opinions about what family life should be like. Historical analysis suggests that the American parent role has been characterized by, on the one hand, virtually total responsibility for the care and supervision of children, and, on the other hand, relatively limited authority. "Only when a child reached age six did society at large take a major hand by insisting that he attend school and by providing schools at the taxpayers' expense. What happens to the child the rest of the time is his parents' business. Society intervenes only if he is severely abused or neglected or runs afoul of the law" (Schultze et al, 1972: 253). At the same time, the dynamic, individualistic nature of American society gave family life a relitively temporary quality which limited the authority of parents. European visitors to America in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries noted not only that American children had a position of reltive equality and a say in family affairs which would have been unthinkable in Europe, but that American parents "give very little advice to their children and let them learn for themselves" (from Rousiers, La Vie Americaine, quoted in Sorel, 1950: 89).

However, until recently, Americans have at least given lip service to the cliché that the presence of children strengthens the family. Now that

central assumption seems to be in question. Data gathered during the last two decades shows rather consistently that the presence of children has a negative rather than a positive effect upon the husband-wife relationships. Members of childless marriages report greater marital satisfaction than those with children; among marriages with children, the greater the number of children, the lower the satisfaction reported by the parents; and on a variety of marital satisfaction indices, satisfaction drops sharply with the birth of the first child, sinks even lower during the school years, and goes up markedly only after the exit of the last child (for a discussion of studies on the effects of children upon marriage, see Bernard, 1972: Chapter 4; Senn and Hartford, 1968, provides a more descriptive account of the stress experienced by young parents with their first born).

One explanation for the current discontinuities in the parent role is that life in most areas of our society does not allow young people to experience the role expectations and tasks of parenthood before they actually take on the role. (It should also be noted that parenthood is one of the few adult roles that can be taken on without presenting any kind of "credentials."). Our small nuclear families and increasingly age-segregated residential communities do not allow potential parents opportunities to observe young children or to communicate regularly with older persons with extensive parenting experience. By contrast with a society like Sweden, where both boys and girls, from the elementary school years, have classes in sex education, home maintenance, child care, and the dynamics of family life (Linner, 1967), American schools offer little in the way of practical education in subjects relevant to family life. What preparation for parenthood exists during pregnancy is dependent upon

the initiative of the parents-to-be and is largely confined to reading and informal consultation with friends. As Rossi (1967) points out, the most concrete action most parents-to-be take is to prepare the baby's room. The birth of the child thus constitutes an abrupt transition rather than a gradual taking on of the responsibilities of a new role. While there is a flood of advice from "experts" on every aspect of child development and care, the very existence of so much expertise may discourage rather than reassure the new parent, since it sets such a high level of expectations for their role performance.

Another explanation is that the responsibilities and skills involved in caring for young children are increasingly in conflict with other things adults value, both within and outside of marriage. Among the findings of the Detroit Area Study is that proportionately more women in the 1970's than in the 1950's said that companionship with husband was the most valuable part of marriage (60% in 1971 compared to 48% in 1955); while fewer said their prime motive in marriage was the chance to have children (from 26% in 1955 to 13% in 1971. Duncan et al., 1973: 8).

Certainly the self-development which is an important component of an individualistic society is at variance with the constant attention and the frequent selflessness often required in the nurturance of babies and young children. Likewise, the youthfulness and glamour which are so valued for both sexes in America are inconsistent with childrearing. Childless adults have more time to devote to their self-development in general and their appearance in particular, and they can be rather vague about their age. The presence of growing children not only takes away time that could be devoted to one's personal development and interests, but is a constant

reminder of the passing of time and one's own youth.

Finally, parenthood may bring to the surface unresolved, and even unrecognized, conflicts about the appropriate roles of men and women. However much in principle the couple may value sexual equalitarianism, the arrival of a child means that someone must be available 24 hours a day to care for it. It seems unlikely that current difficulties in the relationships between men and women in our society will be resolved until questions concerning both the value of children and the locus of responsibility for their routine care and supervision are acknowledged and resolved.

Thus, in addition to the problems peculiar to the parent role in general, the mother and father roles each have unique problems related to changes in sex roles in our society. We shall now take up the more "specialized" problems of these two roles in turn.

The Mother

Among the most significant, and most discussed changes of the past decade are the changes in women's lives, including the rebirth of feminism in the women's liberation movement. I shall here concentrate upon the aspects of these changes which most directly affected the position and care of children. The most obvious and thoroughly documented is the rising propensity of women to work outside of the home. The number and proportion of women in the labor force goes up every time a survey is taken, and during the past decade the rates of participation of mothers have increased

more rapidly than the rates for women in general. In 1970, the mothers of nearly 26 million children under 18 years old were in the labor force. Almost 6 million of these children were under six, that is below regular school age and requiring some kind of care in their mother's absence. By contrast, ten years earlier, mothers of 15.7 million children under 18 were in the labor force, of whom about 4 million were below school age. Table 2 shows the increases in the proportions of mothers in the labor force since 1940. Mothers of preschool-age children are less likely to be in the labor force than those of school age children -- in 1970, a third of all mothers with at least one child under 6 were in the labor force, compared with about half of the mothers whose children were six to 17 years old. However, labor force participation rates of mothers of preschoolers have increased more rapidly in the last decade, up 60% as compared with 20% for mothers of school age children (Waldman and Gover, 1971: 19). Survey data also indicate that many American mothers not now working would do so if they could find someone to take care of their children. Thus we seem to be on our way to a society in which most women, including the mothers of young children, will be employed outside of the home.

The trend toward employment outside of the home and less than full-time commitment to motherhood seems to be an international one, although the rates and patterns of the increase vary from one society to another. In Sweden, the past decade has also been one of substantial increase in the number of married women employed outside the home, from 30% in 1960 to 53% in 1973. Having young children is apparently less of an impediment to the

Table 2

Labor Force Participation Rates of Mothers by Age of Children, 1940, 1950, 1960, and 1970

Year	All Mothers %	Mothers with children under 6 years %	Mothers with children 6 to 17 years only
1940	9[a]	n.a.	n.a.
1950	22	14	33
1960	30	20	43
1970	42	32	52

a - estimate

n.a. - not available

Source: C.L. Schultze et al, Setting National Priorities: The 1973 Budget, p. 256.

employment of women, since more than half of the mothers with at least one child under age 7 (in Sweden, compulsory education begins at 7 instead of at 6 as in the United States, although the school entrance age may be lowered to 6 in the near future). This may be related to what seemed to me a more widespread acceptance in Sweden that the community and the state as a whole were to share responsibility with parents for the care of young children. In Israel, women constitute about 50% of the total labor force, a higher proportion than in the United States, but a smaller proportion of Israeli than American women work outside the home -- 30% of all Jewish women; about 25% of married Jewish women, and a very small but rapidly increasing proportion of the Arab women. As in the U.S. labor force, participation is related both to the age of children (from 20.6% for mothers whose youngest child is less than 2 years old, to 33.3% for mothers whose youngest child is 10-13 years old) and size of family (36.5% for mothers with only one child; 27.5% with two children, and down to 15.8% with three or more children. Statistical Abstract of Israel #22, 1970: 284).

Because of a combination of economic and ideological reasons, the employment of women in paid work is generally higher in communist than capitalistic societies. Women constitute approximately half of the labor force in the Soviet Union, and the labor force participation of women ages twenty to fifty is approximately 85% (Roby, 1973: 388). Reliable empirical data on the employment of women in mainland China are unavailable, although recent visitors observed virtually no full women devoting themselves solemly to housework and care of their own children. The strong

ideological thrust of Maoism toward the full development and use of "womenpower," changes in the marriage law which have in turn produced basic changes in family structure, and a vigorous national program of birth control have altered the roles of parents and children in very basic ways, but we still lack sufficient in-depth information to evaluate the effects of these large changes.

In any country, the desire to work seems to be related to a woman's educational background and occupational qualifications. In the few countries which allow working mothers to take a paid leave for up to three years after the birth of a child, women with higher qualifications, better jobs, and higher salaries are much less likely to use the grants. (In Hungary, for example, only 30.2% of the mothers with college education, compared with 73.8% of the women with primary education have used the grants -- Roby, 1973: 355). In other words, if a society gave women a real choice between working outside the home or staying home to care for young children, by providing both adequate grants for the mothers who chose to stay in the home and adequate day care facilities for those who chose to work outside, one would predict that the women who would choose the former would more likely be those of the lower socio-economic levels, who could obtain only the more menial kinds of jobs, while women who had the qualifications for interesting and well-paying work would prefer that to full-time child care. The general point is that offering a real choice to women could possibly widen rather than narrow the class gaps between women, and between children.

The effect upon children of their mother's employment has been heatedly debated, the claims more often based upon the writer's personal biases than upon any substantial body of empirical evidence. There are some Swedish studies showing no substantial or consistent differences in either school achievement or social adjustment between children whose mothers work outside the home and those who do not, although there are more problems if the mother has to work for economic reasons than if she is working for"professional enthusiasm" (Leijon, 1968: 98). The most thorough analysis of the available American research, by Lois Hoffman (1963), concludes that there is no unequivocal evidence that outside employment of mothers affects children favorably or unfavorably. "So many other factors enter into the picture -- social class, full-time versus part-time employment, age and sex of the child, and the mother's attitude toward the employment -- that the impact of employment per se is lost in the shuffle" (Bernard, 1972: 78).

A second important kind of change in women's lives is in their orientations toward the motherhood role. One of the most important by-products of the women's liberation movement is that many women no longer feel that they should be solely responsible for the day-to-day care of young children -- or even that they should be "naturally" interested in children. Part of this may be explained by the generally low status generally accorded to those who care for and educate children. In no society that I have studied has child care ever paid well or accorded high status or prestige, compared to work involving the manipulation of money, power, and/or ideas. Although the caretaker role will be discussed in greater detail in the next section of this report, it is pertinent to note

here that the care of young children has always been allocated to persons with relatively low positions in the society -- to slaves and domestic servants, to persons in "non-productive" years or categories, such as girls and older persons who have "retired" from "real" work in the society, and to women. Thus one of the consequences of the "consciousness raising" aspects of the women's liberation movement is that, as women come to think more highly of themselves as human beings and cease to think of themselves as the "second" -- and by definition inferior -- sex, they will also be less willing to perform the tasks in the society that do not carry less weight and prestige, including the more tedious aspects of child care.

The Father

If the sex which has traditionally taken most of the burden for the care of young children is now laying down at least part of the burden, is the sex which has previously had a smaller share of child care responsibilities going to pick up that burden? The role of the father has received relatively little attention in the sociological and child development literature. The most recent full-length sociological analysis (Benson, 1968) notes that the father role links the family with the larger society, and has been the embodiment within the family of the social control function. Until recently he has not had much to do with the housekeeping and childrearing functions.

Benson also points out the distinction between biological and social fatherhood, and notes that these two functions have not always been filled by the same man. The latter was a social invention which has taken a

variety of forms in different societies. Children have been raised in the home of their mother's relatives, and have been provided for by their uncles, stepfathers, and older brothers as well as by their biological fathers. Benson concludes that: "The biological father, the progenitor is not as important as the social or nurturant father precisely because the latter has a family role to play after conception" (Benson, 1968: 44).

One of the problems in the United States and other industrialized societies is that the social father role is not being filled in many families by the biological father or any other male. In 1970, seven million American children under age 14 (over 10% of all children in that age category) were being raised in families in which the father was absent (White House Conference on Children, 1970: 22, 141), and while some of these children undoubtedly have meaningful relationships with men other than their biological fathers, there is also evidence that many of them do not. Studies of lower class "streetcorner" men, such as Liebow's Talley's Corner (1966) and Hannerz's Soulside (1969) show how peripheral these men are to the lives of the children they have fathered. Nor do the mother's boyfriends who pass through the ghetto homes in which the children are reared normally develop father-like relationships with them.

Unlike the mother's, the father's position in the family is strongly related to his position in systems outside of the family. One explanation for the streetcorner man's lack of welcome in the homes where their children are raised is that they have failed to achieve occupational status and security. Likewise, Komarovsky's study of unemployed blue collar workers (1971) showed how the loss of a man's job led to the decline of his position vis-a-vis his wife and children.

While there have been some recent pleas for a "return to fatherhood" in this country, it is not possible with the currently available research to conclude whether fatherhood was a more fully developed role in the past. It is true that households and communities in which a man's work was typically in or near his home allowed a father to be in contact with his children more often during the normal course of a workday than in our present metropolitan areas where the place of work is usually at a distance from the home (and the time added on to the work day by commuting often cancels out any time advantages won by the trend toward shorter hours of work). However, the distance imposed by the more authoritarian character of the father role in the past may have outweighed the advantages gained by mere physical proximity. It should also be noted that the call for greater activation of the father role can be differently interpreted. Male writers calling for a "return to fatherhood" are usually expressing nostalgia for the undisputed authority of the male head of the household attributed to the traditional families of the past. Women, on the other hand, are usually asking not for a return to a form of family life perceived by them as oppressive for both women and children but rather: (a) for men to show more interest in and affection for young children; and (b) for a more equitable distribution of the more onerous duties involved in caring for them.

Rhetoric to the contrary, there is little evidence of a strong trend toward male caretakers of young children. The few well publicized cases of "paternity leave," where fathers have won the right to spend more time at home caring for their children without the loss of their job or its fringe benefits, have so far been limited to a few occupations, such as

teaching, that allow relatively flexible working schedules. Scandinavian corporations and agencies which allow men to work less than full time in order to share domestic responsibilities with their wives report that few men have so far taken advantage of the "opportunity" (interviews with Siv Thorsell, Anita Soderlund). Although it is now Swedish policy to recruit men into day care center positions, in the few centers where I observed any men at all, there was usually one, and he was usually a conscientious objector or an older man who was for some reason unemployed. (Of course the Swedish policy is so new that it is unfair to draw conclusions about its success, and developments there should be followed). I observed no men in any of the day care centers or kibbutz children's homes I visited in Israel, and some of the Israeli men I questioned actually recoiled at the notion that men might work in such places. Mirra Komarovsky's current studies of American college men indicate that while many give lip service to the general principle of equality and liberation for women, most assume that <u>their</u> future wife will stay home with the children during their pre-school years and arrange her working schedule around their school hours if she later goes to work. "Though they were willing to aid their wives in varying degrees, they frequently excluded specific tasks, for instance, 'not the laundry,' 'not the cleaning,' 'not the diapers,' and so on" (Komarovsky, 1973: 879).

As a recent analysis entitled. "Why Men Don't Rear Children," argued, it is so much to most men's advantage to keep things the way they are that it is doubtful if men will change the way they play the father role

in the absence of revolutionary changes in the structure of our society. "Of course, children are not just a handy excuse to keep women out of the job market. Most people -- male and female -- want to have them, and somebody has to rear them. Men naturally prefer that women do it, so that having children need not interfere with their own occupational pursuits. . . Where outright forbidding of the wife to work is no longer effective, the continued allocation of child-rearing responsibility to women accomplishes the same end. . ." (Polatnick, 1973: 64).

In sum, the ideology concerning the role of the father does seem to be changing in modern industrialized societies, but there is still a large gap between the rhetoric of a more active, equalitarian role and the actual behavior of men in the role. Nor do we have the institutional arrangements which would allow -- and motivate -- men to change their role behavior. Furthermore, whether or not one views the relationships between men and women as "political," there is a clear conflict of interest between the sexes with regard to the allocation of child care responsibilities, and at the moment, the children are the losers.

The Role of the Caretaker

Caretakers are persons who have direct contact with and responsibility for children during a given period of time. Besides the child's own parents, caretakers may be relatives, friends, professional nurses, teachers, and other child care specialists, or persons without special training who do the work for pay or because they have been assigned to it by some societal authority. The caretaking setting may be in or outside the child's home, and if outside may range from a large center with a director and specialized staff to another home where a single individual looks after one or more children not her own.

Before discussing the kinds of people who have filled caretaker roles, something should be said about the nature of the activities involved in caring for young children. First, child care is an activity which requires full time availability but not full time attention and action (except for emergency situations such as when the child is seriously ill or has some serious behavior problem). In this sense, the role is akin to that of an intern or resident "on call" in a hospital room. He must be there all the time and prepared for whatever cases may come in during his hours on call, but the typical shift alternates between periods of intense activity and periods when nothing is happening. As an economic analysis points out, this kind of activity is most "efficiently conducted in a setting in which other activities are also being carried out. The American home during the colonial and frontier periods was such a setting.

"As long as other activities are going on in the household -- cleaning, cooking, or specialized activity for sale on the market like working on the family farm -- the extra time cost of having children around is less than it would be for an organization specializing in child care. Besides time, the space needed for child care often is costless in the home where it is needed anyway (for sleeping, cooking, etc.)" (Nelson and Krashinsky, 1972: 3). The contemporary American home is inefficient in this respect, and caring for children in centers built for this sole purpose and set apart from the rest of the community may also be inefficient, quite apart from their cutting children off from the rest of society.

A second characteristic of child caring is the routine nature of much of it. While books and other expert advice to parents emphasize the creative aspects of child rearing, in fact the amount of time spent in "developmental" activities such as reading to or with children, teaching them to enjoy nature, arts and crafts projects, and special excursions is relatively small. Even in programs designed specifically to enhance children's intellectual and social development, "instruction" is limited to brief periods (e.g., 15 minutes a day in the home intervention program developed at Hebrew University Center for Research in Education of the Disadvantaged (Lombard, 1971). Much more time is spent in feeding, bathing, diapering, keeping the child from injuring himself and patching him when he does, plus the laundry, food preparation, and other "support" housekeeping tasks that multiply when children are present.

Third, while much of the work of child care is routine and can be combined with some other kinds of activities, child care is labor intensive -- that is, there is a definite limit on the number of young children any adult can look after. (The ratio which is coming to be the standard of U.S. Federal and state regulatory agencies is one adult to every five children, and while this may be an unrealistic luxury for many communities, it gives an idea of the sheer numbers of child care workers required.) Nor can the work be made more efficient in the sense that industrial production can be. Diaper services, washing machines, and prepared formulas and baby foods have cut down on the housework connected with child care, but it is difficult to think of mechanical methods of feeding and bathing children, of catching them when they run in the road or fall down, of breaking up altercations between children, not to mention all the forms of verbal communication between caretaker and child. Child care does not lend itself to being speeded up, increased or otherwise being made more "efficient."

Given the special qualities of caretaking as a work form, what kinds of persons have been allocated to this role? Anthropological studies have shown that caretakers have been of all ages (including only slightly older children), both sexes, and many locations in the kinship structure (see, for example Mead and Wolfenstein, 1955). Grandparents are the most common caretakers in some societies. The "babushka" has played an important role in Russian society, where three-generation households are still common. Indeed a concern of some students of Russian society is that as Russian women gain more education and work experience, they become less willing to

stay home and care for grandchildren, which will mean that child care in the home will soon no longer be a viable alternative to state nurseries and kindergartens (Jacoby, 1971). Although statistics on mainland China are still largely unavailable, recent visitors estimate that more than half the children aged 18 months to 3 years are cared for by a grandparent, and the proportion is considerably higher in rural communes, where child care centers are few and their facilities very inadequate (Sidel, 1972; Printz, 1973). Unmarried girls have been a major source of child care, from the ubiquitous part-time American baby-sitter to the institutionalized full time use of unmarried girls and women in the Bruderhof and other utopian communities where virtually all married women hold jobs outside the home (Zablocki, 1971:122ff). Perhaps the most specialized care is provided in Israeli kibbutzim, where children live, with a small group of their age peers, in a series of children's homes, each with its own kitchen, bedrooms, bathing facilities, and at certain age levels, classroom. Each children's house is under the direction of a "metapelet" or nurse, who has been chosen by the community because of her interest and ability to work with a particular age level, who has received specialized training at colleges operated by the kibbutz federations, and who cares for successive "generations" of children of the same age level. Metapelets are themselves members of the kibbutz, and like virtually all adult members, are usually wives and mothers themselves. Metapelets are assisted by other women from the community, again who have chosen this work from among the types of jobs available to the women

of the community (Bettelheim, 1969; Spiro, 1965; personal interviews with kibbutz members). One of the most interesting experiments in group caretaking of infants and young children is now in process at the Synanon communities in the United States, where children live in a series of children's homes, cared for by adult members who have chosen this kind of work, as in the kibbutz. Unlike the kibbutz, however, parents' day-to-day involvement in the life of the child, is not a crucial component of the caretaking system. While many mothers visit the children's home each day, there is no segment of the day which children regularly spend with their parents, and many children do not see their parents at all for weeks or even longer. Like most positions in the Synanon community, each caretaker's position is filled by a pair of individuals who alternate in performing the role. Workers in the children's homes generally work ten hours a day for seven days, after which they have seven days off during which time the role is filled by their "partner." (Interview with Elizabeth Missakian).

The one characteristic which the caretakers of young children in most societies share is their relatively low position in the society. Moreover, in all of the societies I studied, the younger the children the caretaker works with, the lower the pay. As far as I can tell, until now the caretaker role has been filled by persons from one or more of the following groups:

-- slaves and servants (the lowest level in any society)

-- young people (usually girls who have not yet entered into "productive" work in the society, and older people who have retired from it;

-- women of all ages (the link between day care and women's rights has been pointed out by many feminists, who argue that women cannot gain high status or have equal opportunity in any job until they are released from sole responsibility for the routine care of young children).

Even in the Israeli kibbutz, where in my opinion, children are more valued and enjoyed, and where a greater portion of the community's capital and energies are invested in the care and education of children than any place I have observed, working with children is still considered inferior to "productive labor," particularly in the agricultural sector. Moreover, although the ideology and literature on the kibbutz movement still stresses equality between the sexes, empirical data on work and committee assignments in actual kibbutzim indicate an increasing sex-role differentiation, with men being assigned to the secretariat and the more powerful committees, and the women the education, health and parents committee, and to jobs in the children's homes, schools and communal kitchens and laundries (Gerson, 1971; Talmon, 1965 and 1971). The high birthrate characteristic of the more established kibbutzim and the males' continued refusal to work in jobs related to child care, means that the majority of women are doing this kind of work most of the time. Candid informants admit that adult women are the most discontented group in kibbutzim today, and their discontent is a manner of concern to movement leaders since they are believed to be the driving force behind most families who decide to leave kibbutzim (interviews with Yehudah Paz, Beni Katz-Nelson and kibbutz members).

In the United States, as in other societies, child caretakers have been drawn largely from the societal sub-groups with the least status and

power. Until recent years, the major burden of child care was assumed by female servants, when mothers could afford them, amd by mothers themselves when they could not afford servants.* Many women have also depended upon help and advice from female relatives and neighbors, although the extent and nature of this caretaking has not, as far as I know, been systematically studied. Group care of children has been available, on a small scale, for over a century. The first U.S. day nursery was opened in Boston, in 1938, to provide care for the children of seamen's wives and widows, and by the end of the nineteenth century there were about 175 day nurseries in various parts of the country, mostly operated by settlement houses and other charitable organizations for the children of poor working mothers. A later development was the nursery school, which was also clearly distinguishable from the day nursery by its clientele (mostly middle and upper class and relatively well educated), its emphasis upon education and development, and its shorter hours (usually about three hours a day, which meant that it was not a feasible form of care for employed mothers. In fact, many nursery schools were "cooperative," with some or all of the mothers serving as part-time caretakers. For a brief history of group child care in America, see Roby, 1973: Chapter 10).

The first extensive American experience with group care was during World War II, when the Lanham Act provided 51 million dollars for 3,000 local day care centers in labor shortage areas, and the Kaiser Corporation alone cared for 3,800 children in twenty-four-hour-a-day centers located in company plants (Roby, 1973: Chapter 14; Grotberg, 1972: 78-79).

* In 1900, nearly half of all working women were domestic servants or farmhands. By 1960, the proportion had dropped to one tenth, and by 1970 to less than four percent (Kahn, 1973: 156-157).

In retrospect, the post World War II period, characterized by an unusually high birth rate, a strong familistic orientation throughout the society, and the "feminine" mystique which is now derided by feminist writers, seems a kind of historical freak. Actually the prevailing attitude in this country has always been that group care of children is unnatural, if not actually harmful, and that the good mother is one who stays at home. The later 1940's and 1950's were simply a period in which socio-economic conditions -- a labor market in which neither government nor industry employers perceived a need for recruiting more female employees, the virtual disappearance of domestic service as an occupation, and economic affluence which allowed the majority of the big new families to be supported by the husband's income, along with the persuasive arguments of Bowlby and others about the dangers of maternal deprivation -- were all consistent with stay-at-home mothers. Or to put it another way, there were no strong trends, such as a labor shortage, that went against the American preference for young children to be cared for in their own homes by their own mothers.

A portion of the child care services formerly performed by maids were taken on by the babysitter, an American social invention which has never been systematically studied. Informal investigation indicates that during the last two decades the majority of American children, whether or not their mothers are employed outside the home, have been cared for by babysitters, and, moreover, that more American adolescents earn money from babysitting than from any other kind of job. However, there are no comprehensive empirical data on how many babysitters there are, who they are, what they

do, and what they earn, nor do we know to what extent babysitting provides young people with anticipatory socialization for parenthood. What can be noted about the role is that it is a minor one for most people. Almost anyone can be a babysitter, and most babysitting is done as a part-time means of earning money rather than as a "real" job that requires any special preparation or that serves as preparation for some other occupation. For most parents babysitting is an activity which allows them to make relatively brief excursions out of the home, for shopping, recreation, and so on, but does not provide the regular caretaking service required by a parent with a full-time job.

Now that so many mothers have entered the labor force, despite the dire warnings of the child development specialists and the impediments our society continues to place in the way of working mothers, there have been some attempts to gather information about their child care arrangements. (We still know very little about the children of non-employed women, although there are clues that the amount of actual interaction between non-employed mothers and their children is surprisingly small; that nearly all mothers use some kind of outsider caretakers; and that these child care arrangements are largely informal and involve little or no monetary payment.) Table 3 shows the results of two separate and not entirely comparable, national surveys of working mothers. In 1970, as in 1965, half of the preschool children were cared for in their own home; about one third were cared for in someone else's home, a slight increase from 1965; and ten per cent were in day care centers,

almost double the proportion in centers five years earlier. A study by the Child Welfare League estimated that in 1965, almost a million children under 14 were left on their own while their parents were at work, of whom 7,000 were under the age of six; another million were left in the care of older brothers and sisters under 16 or relatives over 65 (Child Welfare League, 1969: 3).

All surveys of the day care facilities in this country show that the capacity is far less than the need. A 1967 survey by the Child Welfare League found a total of 34,700 licensed facilities, with a capacity for 475,200 children. Of these, 10,400 of the facilities were day care centers, with space for 393,300 children (an average of 37.8 children per center); the remaining were 24,300 licensed family day care homes, with places for 81,900 children (an average of 3.4 children per home). More recent estimates, based upon March 1971 data from the U.S. Department of Health, Education and Welfare, indicate that there has been a substantial increase in the number of places in licensed centers and homes, but that the 905,000 places now available are still not close to the estimated several million children who need some kind of day care service (Women's Bureau, 1973:2). Although there are no reliable statistics, all researchers on day care agree that the number of unlicensed day care places is far greater than the number of places in licensed homes and centers. Roby feels that "private child-minding" is a bigger "industry" than anyone imagines, and she estimates that more than half of the American children under six are now regularly cared for in some kind of regular arrangement at least part time. (She also estimates that as many as ninety

Table 3. Percentage Distribution of Child Care Arrangements of Working Mothers, by Age of Children, 1965 and 1970.

	Age of Children			
	Under 6 Years		6 to 14 years	
Child Care Arrangement	1965[a]	1970[b]	1965[a]	1970[b]
Care in own home	48.0	49.9	66.0	78.7
- By father	14.4	18.4	15.1	10.6
- By other relative	17.5	18.9	22.6	20.6
- By a nonrelative	15.3	7.3	6.8	4.5
- Mother worked during child's school hours	0.8	5.2	21.5	42.9
Care in someone else's home	30.7	34.5	9.2	12.6
- By a relative	14.9	15.5	4.7	7.6
- By a nonrelative	15.8	19.0	4.5	5.0
Day care Center	5.6	10.5	0.6	0.6
No special Care[c]	15.7	5.0	24.3	8.3
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: Schultze et al, 1973: 261.

a. When several kinds of care were used for the same child, the predominating and most recent child care arrangement is given.
b. Child care arrangements on the last day the mother worked.
c. Includes child looked after self, mother looked after child while working, and other.

per cent of all parents would use organized child care regularly if it met certain basic criteria, such as low cost, nearness to the home, and long enough hours.) Given the shortage of licensed centers and homes, there is no question that the majority of children, whether or not their parents are working outside the home, are cared for by babysitters, neighbors, or in unlicensed family care homes.

While day care is thus a largely home-based, informal operation in the United States, two trends should be noted. One is a trend toward care outside the home in general and toward group care in particular. As Table 3 showed, although only a small portion of the preschoolers were in group day care centers, the greatest rate of increase (about doubling) took place in this category between 1965 and 1970. The second trend, which one cannot see from the table, is that day care is evolving from a nonmonetized to a monetized arrangement. A 1965 survey (Low and Spindler, 1965) estimated that only 21 per cent of the arrangements for care of children under fourteen and 34 per cent for children under six involved a money payment. However, this is also changing. Although figures for the 1970's have not yet been published, the analysis of the economics of child care in the Roby volume points out that:

> paid child care is becoming more and more the norm. The steady increase in the percentage of mothers with children under eighteen who work outside the home at once increases the demand for care and reduces the nonmonetized supply of day care. The extended family has vanished; for instance, only 4 per cent of Massachusetts homes with children under six have any nonparental adult living in the home. Teenagers spend time with teenagers. Thus child care is becoming increasingly monetized (Roby, 1973: 99).

The shift toward more formalized and commercialized forms of child care means that large organizations outside of the home will be increasingly involved in providing care. The role of government and of private industry will be the subject of the next section of this report. What these changes will do to the role of the caretaker is still uncertain. One likely result is that there will be increased efforts to upgrade and professionalize the caretaker, and certainly there is room for improvement in a role characterized by such low status, low pay, and high turnover. The median salary for teachers in U.S. centers is $358 a month, less than the average of the centers' full-time clerical workers. Not surprisingly, the role is still filled mainly by women for whom the salary is supplemental income rather than the main source of family support. Also not surprisingly, the rate of staff turnover is unusually high -- some centers report turnover rates of 100 per cent a year (Chapman and Lazar, 1971: 45).

Although so many children are now cared for outside of the home, there is still little empirical evidence on the criteria for good caretakers. Parents' responses to questions about what they want in child care tend to focus upon reasonable cost, location, and hours rather than upon the personal qualifications of the caretaker (Roby, 1973). Center directors and other professionals interviewed about the desired qualifications of personnel stressed the importance of personality characteristics over educational qualifications, but the characteristics given tended to be general and idealized, and not likely to be found simultaneously in many real-life candidates for caretaker roles (see, for example, Chapman and Lazar, 1971: 39-40). There are no studies on children's criteria for their own caretakers -- apparently their opinions are not considered relevant to researchers and planners.

Additional insight into the American situation may be gained by looking at the caretaking patterns in other societies which are grappling with the consequences of major increases in the number of employed mothers. The most comprehensive data available are from Sweden, a country that is so thorough in its analysis of social problems and so open in reporting the extent to which problems remain unsolved that a recent report contained computations of "excess enrollments" in preschools (that is, the percentages of children actually attending preschools beyond the number of legitimate places available. These rates have been running between twelve and fifteen percent for the past five years, with a slight increase in excess enrollment each year (Rosengren, 1973: 6-7). The basic types of licensed day care and the number of available places in each are shown in Table 4. Twenty per cent of all Swedish parents have children in day care centers (daghem) and another twenty percent leave their children with licensed day care mothers (familjedaghem). Moreover, the number of places in licensed centers and homes increased about 700 per cent between 1965 and 1970, a huge increase compared with that in the United States during the same period. Licensed day care is differentially available in different parts of the country. There are actually unused places in Stockholm, while the severest shortages are in the new towns where many young families live and university towns which now have a high proportion of married students. Throughout the country, priority is given to children with the greatest need, such as children of single parents.

Table 4 - Swedish Day Care: Types and Numbers of Places in Government Approved Facilities

# of Places in:	daghem (day care or nurseries)	lekskolar (play or nursery school)	fritidshem (free time centers)	familjedaghem (municipal family day nurseries)
1950	9,700	18,700	2,400	1,500
1965	11,900	52,100	3,000	8,000
1970	33,000	86,000	6,500	32,000
1972 (estimates)	52,000	105,000	10,000	45,000

Source: Children's Day-homes 1970/71, National Central Bureau of Statistics, Stockholm.

In addition to government approved and subsidized caretakers, it is estimated that 60,000 children are in private family day nurseries, and there are some 20,000 "home helps," private maids or mother's helpers (Leijon, 1968: 90-91). As in this country, the servant role is a disappearing one, and grandmothers and other relatives are less and less available as child caretakers. Swedish nursery schools (lekskola), like American ones, take children for only about three hours a day. The Swedes acknowledge that at least forty per cent of the parents of preschoolers have no satisfactory solution to the child care problem, and that the present shortage is expected to continue throughout the 1970's.

Reliable statistics on child caretakers in Israel are harder to obtain. This is partly because child care, like most social services in Israel, has been devised and delivered under emergency conditions, in particular the pressures caused by the waves in in-migration, which have brought everything from child-survivors of the World War II holocaust to the children of the most impoverished Oriental Jewish populations. In one survey over half of all Israeli children were diagnosed as culturally disadvantaged and in need of some kind of compensatory education or service (interview with Joseph Marcus). Also until recently most child care services were provided on a private basis or in institutions set up by the women's voluntary organizations which have initiated so many of the social services and reforms in Israel.

Finally, it is difficult to obtain a clear picture of child care and caretakers because they come from such a complex and uncoordinated set of organizations and authorities. The following paragraphs will outline the major sources of care for children, roughly in order of the age of the children served.

Mother and child clinics (Tipot Halav). These are part of the National Health Services and provide prenatal and child health care up to age five. The service includes home visits by nurses. The focus is on inculcating standards of hygiene, good feeding methods, and awareness of children's physical development. The clinics are highly respected and trusted and are used by most Israeli mothers of all social levels. The clinic staff do not, however, serve as real caretakers of children.

Day care homes and centers. Below age three there is no formal system of government approved and subsidized day care. Until recently it has been provided almost entirely on a private basis, in local neighborhoods (on a walk through almost any neighborhood of Jerusalem, one passes several small "home nurseries," where up to a dozen preschoolers are being casually looked after by one or two women) or in centers set up by women's voluntary organizations. A 1969 study by the Demographic Center* reported that there were 280 day nurseries in the country taking care of some 9,000 children (less than 10 per cent of the children in this age category). Fifty-two per cent of all the nurseries were run by the Working Mothers' Association of the Women Workers' Council of the General Federation of Labor (Moetzet Hapoalot); 22 per cent by the Women's International Zionist Organization (WIZO); only three per cent by municipalities and local councils, and the rest by a variety of other voluntary organizations. Only about 10 per cent ran for a full day and provided meals (Demographic Center, 1971, translated by Laura Starr).

* A council set up in the Prime Minister's Office, in 1968, to coordinate the activities pertaining to family planning and care of preschool children. More will be said about governmental responsibility and activity with respect to children in the next section.

Pre-kindergartens (gan heshut).** These are non-compulsory preschools for three and four-year olds, subsidized through the state but run through municipalities. About half of the 95,000 children in this age category attend either a municipal or a private gan. (About 20% are private and attended mainly by children of well-to-do families.) About 32,000 of the 40,000 children attending a gan receive a subsidy from the Ministry of Education. One important function of the gan is to assimilate the children of new Israeli citizens into the society and to narrow the very substantial gaps between the various ethnic groups that comprise modern Israel. Thus there is a clear policy of favoritism at this level -- virtually all the children in immigrant villages and about 80% of the children in new development towns (populated largely by recent immigrants and members of underprivileged groups) attend a pre-kindergarten. Most meet five hours daily and thus serve an educational rather than a strictly caretaking function. There are some current proposals to extend the gan day, so that children of working mothers could stay until at least 4:00 p.m., with two hours rest and a light meal in the afternoon, but to date only about fifty of the 1,500 to 2,000 long-day units needed have been financed (Harman, 1969).

Kindergarten (gan hovah). These are free and compulsory, although parents have a choice of a religious or non-religious school. Nearly all five-year-olds attend. Like pre-kindergartens, kindergartens meet for only a few hours a day, and there are efforts to provide "long-day" facilities at this level also.

** Gan is an inclusive word for kindergarten or preschool.

The government has also recently begun to support an additional year of compulsory kindergarten for disadvantaged four-year-olds, with a particular focus upon language skills -- a kind of Israeli Head Start.

The Demographic Center has tried to determine the professional level of caretakers employed in state-subsidized preschools. Among the 789 day nursery employees in caretaker roles, only 27 per cent are classified as "professional" (that is, have training as metapelotzin or children's nurses). At the gan level, where professional training has a pedagogical rather than a health focus, it is estimated that less than 75 per cent of the children are taught by professional teachers gan nenet). Following a study commissioned by the Israeli Knesset, the preschool now has a more educational focus and this educational function has been moved from the Ministry of Health to the Ministry of Education. The state offers subsidies to any day care center that can establish that it offers some "teaching" each day. As might be expected, there is a developing conflict between gan nenet and metapelotzin. Their training differs in length as well as substance, and metapelotzin now face the alternatives of getting additional training with a different orientation or losing positions to persons with kindergarten training. However, metapelotzin are members of a very large and powerful nurses union, which is not likely to give up control of so many positions without a strong fight.

It is true, however, that even in state-subsidized day care settings, a large number of caretaker positions are filled by persons with little or no training either in nursing or education. The highest proportion of

trained staff is found in the larger cities; the proportion of professionals in development towns is much smaller and declines to about one per cent in rural areas (Demographic Center, 1971, translated by Laura Starr; interview with Avima Lombard).

In some of the centers I visited, only the director had had professional training, and most of the staff were local women whose major caretaking experience had been with their own families. As Marcus describes the "typical" gan nenet, she is a woman who:

> possesses a smattering of popular psychology and a good deal of the folk culture, may frequently interpret atypical behavior to mother, but for the most part arranges a context for behavior, mediates disputes, supervises safety, and distributes materials and, of course, snacks. The theme of . . . early socialization seems to be a path toward independence with a minimal amount of frustration of immature behavior. Popular notions of psycho-analytic theories are applied in compound with socialist ideology, Jewish theology and folkways, and the various ethnic behaviors included in the immigrants' baggage. Added to all this are a multitude of perceptions of what the ideal Israeli should grow up to become (Marcus, 1970: Chapter 5, page 22).

By contrast with the day care settings I observed in Sweden, the low ratio of adults to children and the relatively passive role taken by man caretakers were noticeable. With the exception of the kibbutz, caretakers tended to leave children pretty much to their own devices except when they were engaged in formal teaching. Of course, much more extensive and systematic observation would be needed to draw any valid comparisons, but my impression is that caretaking is more of a custodial role in Israel than in the other societies I studied. Much of this may be explained by the nature of Israeli society itself, where social services in general have a more improvisatory quality than in more settled and affluent societies, and where development caretaking is still a luxury that few can afford.

Some of the most intriguing reports about major innovations in caretaking come from recent visitors to mainland China. There are three levels of preschool care in China today:

Nursery rooms. For babies from about two to eighteen months. These are usually located in the mother's workplace, and mothers are given time off, usually twice a day, to breast-feed their babies or, if not breast-feeding, just to hold or play with them. Factory nursery rooms are staffed by "aunties," who have no special training but who are chosen from among the workers in the factory who are the "most responsible and the most patient" (Sidel, 1972: 93). These facilities are widely used. Sidel claims that only about 10 per cent of the mothers of preschoolers are not in the labor market and take full care of their own children.

Nurseries. For children from about eighteen months to three years. These are also usually located at the place of employment, so that parents may be close to their children, although a child may be placed in a nursery in his father's as well as his mother's factory. Reliable figures are not available, but it is estimated that about half of all the children in this age category are in nurseries; the other half are cared for by grandparents (many of whom live with or near their children) or neighbors. In rural areas, the proportion of children in nurseries is less, the proportion cared for by grandparents more.

Kindergartens. For children from age three to school age (about 7½). The majority of Chinese children attend kindergarten (about 80% in the cities, somewhat less in the country). Unlike the nursery rooms and nurseries, kindergartens are most likely to be located in the child's

neighborhood and they are generally run by neighborhood revolutionary committees.

In the rural communes, care is more informal. Where group care is available, nurseries and kindergartens may be combined. In rural communities, day care is likely to be used sporadically, for example, during the harvest season, when pregnant women and persons with physical handicaps care for little children so that everyone else can work in the fields.

Several unique features of the caretaker role in contemporary China can be noted. First, care of infants and young children is characterized by what Sidel terms "multiple mothering." During the course of a typical day, a Chinese child may be cared for by his biological mother (while nursing, before and after work, and on days off), by aunties or nursery workers (women chosen for their motherly qualities), and by grandparents when they live in or near his home. Moreover, he is likely to see the same set of caretakers day after day; it is claimed that there is very low turnover of personnel in nursing rooms, nurseries and kindergartens. Second, there is a consistency of orientation and very little interpersonal competition among the various persons caring for the young child. In contrast to the diversity of child caring patterns characteristic of our country and the underlying suspicions and conflict between parents and day care personnel. I sometimes observed in the United States, Sweden, and Israel, there is apparently widespread agreement among Chinese caretakers that they wish all children to develop the values of loving and helping each other, of "serving the people" and putting the needs of the society ahead of personal interests, and of identifying with physical labor and those who perform it (Sidel, 1972: 82; Committee of

Concerned Asian Scholars, 1972: 287-291). Third, there is no move toward professionalism or credentialism with respect to the caretaker role -- in fact, current trends are in the opposite direction. Personnel at all levels of preschool are recruited far more on the basis of personality characteristics than of any kind of formal training, and we had the feeling that the Chinese consider a warm motherly type with common sense the best sort of person to care for small children. This anti-expert bias is, of course, reflective of what is going on in society at large" (Sidel, 1972: 126).

Thus, China seems to have created a remarkably efficient and humane system of child care, which is consistent with other societal institutions, in a remarkably brief period of time. It must be remembered, though, that these conclusions are all based upon unsystematic observations, during relatively short visits, to settings chosen by the Chinese hosts. A deeper understanding of the new Chinese system of caretaking, including the extent to which it is continuous and discontinuous with traditional methods of childrearing, must await the gathering of more extensive data, with more rigorous research techniques, than the current state of visitors' accounts contain.

This discussion has, I hope, given some idea of what is involved in the analysis of the caretaker role and communicated how little is known about the dimensions of the role, the characteristics of those who fill it (or who <u>should</u> fill it), and the variety of patterns caretaking has assumed in various societies. A number of issues have been touched only

peripherally. For example, whether children should be cared for in groups or individually and whether institutional care is necessarily harmful are important unresolved issues for many societies. (China is the one country I studied which seems to have made a clear decision in favor of group care-taking, even for long periods of time, and to have no qualms about its decisions.) The preference for individualized, home care is clear in the United States, and this preference can be noted even in the pattern of services provided by public and voluntary agencies for neglected, dependent, emotionally disturbed, and other "problem" children. American children receive social services from state and local agencies at a rate of 416 per 10,000 children under twenty years of age. Even among those not living with their own parents, there is a predominance of care in the closest approximation of a home -- seven per cent of the children are in foster family homes, while only two per cent are in all group homes and institutions combined (U.S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, 1973: Tables 1 and 2). This is in contrast to Israel, where programs for children "in distress" tend to concentrate on institutional care, "primarily because of the availability of this type of facility as compared to others, and because of the historical respectability associated with group education and ideology-oriented group life" (e.g., the Youth Aliya camps and peer groups within kibbutzim. Jaffe, 1970: 345). Since the late 1940's, something under four per cent of the Israeli child population under 18 were reared away from their own homes, and of these children, almost seventy per cent were living in 142 institutions during the 1960's (Ibid.: 333).

Moreover, careful evaluative research has found no significant differences in intellectual or personal development between children in institutions and similar children living in other settings (Jaffe, 1964). Clearly group care per se can no longer be assumed to be detrimental to children's welfare, but we still know too little about the components of good and poor caretakers and caretaking to make a final judgement on any particular form of care.

Other System Roles

In this section we shall consider the role of individuals and groups not in direct or primary relationships with the child,but who have concern for and impact upon children and child care programs. They are located at all levels of society. We shall examine two of these "outside" sub-systems and mention some others that seem worthy of study. Finally, we shall consider the relationship of the total society to its child care system.

Government. The distinguishing characteristics of American governmental involvement at the national level are its relative recency and the lack of any comprehensive national child care policy and set of programs. "Until quite recently care of children below school age or during hours not in school was not thought to be a public responsibility except in emergencies" (such as a world war, or individual cases where a child is severely abused or neglected or runs afoul of the law. Fried et al, 1973: 161). However, as Table 5 shows, the last few years have seen substantial increases in federal spending for early childhood programs. The 1974 estimate for day care combines $1.3 billion from social service grants to the states and $117 million under the Work Incentive Program (WIN) for welfare mothers in jobs or job-training programs. It is also estimated that about $130 million of the $400 million earmarked for Head Start will go for day care expenses for low income families. In addition to the program expenditures shown in the table, the federal government provides indirect subsidies, such as allowing

families to increase their income tax deductions for the cost of child care or allowing welfare mothers to deduct such costs from their computation of income. What has changed public attitudes and led to this increased public support? According to the Brookings Foundation group who conduct a yearly analysis of the federal budget, the causes are a combination of forces, including women's liberation, the huge increases in welfare rolls, and the influence of child development research showing the importance of early learning experiences upon children's later development. While my year's work did not allow me to master the intricacies of governmental involvement, two "products" or results should be noted. One is that as government's investment in child care increases, so does its interest in regulating what it has subsidized. Among the most important areas in which standards are set by various levels of the government are the physical space and facilities, and the staff ratio and training requirements. While one might not go so far as the feminists who claim that complex and rigid licensing standards are a conscious means to keep mothers in the home, it is often difficult to draw the line between standards that meet the real requirements of children's welfare and those that go beyond a society's ability and willingness to invest in its children. A second result of increasing governmental involvement in child care is the proliferation of programs and agencies and the almost inevitable competition between them for funds and control. The red tape encountered by a family seeking some kind of service or by persons attemting to operate a day care center often reach the ridiculous, and the maze of

Table 5

Federal Spending for Day Care and Other Early Childhood Programs, Fiscal Years 1970-74

	millions of dollars				
	1970	1971	1972 Estimate	1973 Estimate	1974 Estimate
Program					
Day care	164	233	404	507	1,417
Head Start	330	363	364	369	400
Preschool programs under Elementary and Secondary Education Act, Title 1	26	92	98	93	n.a.
Total	520	688	866	969	

Sources: Schultze et al.,1972: 253; Fried et al., 1973: 163-164.

n.a. - not available

regulations and multiple approvals required for the simplest transactions,often raise the costs of child care without enhancing its quality. For example, because the governmental regulations for Head Start programs and day care center call for different ways of accounting for food, it is all but impossible for them to share the same building (Day Care Consultation Service, n.d.).

The complexity of the governmental role in the child care system is not unique to the United States. In both of the countries I visited during the past year, the parliament had recently appointed a commission to study preschool problems and to recommend needed programs and legislation, and in both cases, this action had brought to the surface long standing conflicts among the ministries which have responsibility for children. The conflict between the Israeli Ministry of Education and the nurses' union has already been mentioned. Israel has the most complicated governmental arrangements with respect to child care. The following outline, from the chapter on child care in Israel from the Roby volume, seems to me the simplest explanation of the major ministries and public institutions involved:

"The Ministry of Labour acts in a double role -- through the Institute of Social Security and through the Department for Working Women. The Institute of Social Security is mainly responsible for the implementation of the legal basis for the insurance of the pregnant mother and the infant, and the payment of maternity and family allowances. The newly established Department for Working Women is involved in the problem of

day care centers for working mothers. The Ministry took the administrative and financial responsibility for opening new centers and enlarging some of the existing ones. In certain cases it pays a special allowance to mothers who pay for the care of their preschool or pre-kindergarten children.

The Ministry of Education is responsible for the educational control over kindergartens and nursery schools and for training kindergarten and nursery teachers.

The Ministry of Health is maintaining many mother and child care centers; it provides innoculations and it is responsible for the health standards of the nursery and kindergarten schools.

The Ministry of Welfare takes care of special cases of the chronically ill, the retarded, the mental cases, the orphans and abandoned children.

The Office of the Prime Minister is a new arrival in the field. In 1968 it was decided to establish the Demographic Center as part of the Prime Minister's Office. The task of the Center was to coordinate the activities pertaining to the care of the preschool child and family planning, to design long-range plans and to suggest improvements in the existing system. The Center is helped by the Public Council and the Executive Committee. It does not have executive authority and its work is limited to the initiation and coordination of "inter-ministerial and interagency consultation on a regular basis...concerned with strengthening...support of the family to ensure priority consideration for all those services which help the child to become self-sufficient and a well-integrated, constructive member of an expanding society."

The Municipalities repeat the Governmental pattern and their various departments engage in the same types of activities. In general the implementation of governmental projects is carried out by the corresponding municipal departments. But this is not necessarily the case in all instances. There are certain activities, for which governmental departments are directly responsible"(Roby, 1973: 418-419).

In Sweden, the conflict between the Ministries of Education, Social Welfare, and Health also exists, but it is more muted than in Israel. Sweden has the most clearly articulated and comprehensive system of child care services, of which the most important components are: the "maternity benefit," a lump sum paid to all women following the birth of a child; the children's allowance, now over $200 per child per year; a family housing allowance; and health insurance, which covers hospital care, visits to doctors, and medicine.

Private Industry. Among the institutions which have the most influence over the lives of U.S. families are the large corporations and agencies that employ most of us. Although day care is often included in the package of issues comprising current debates over "corporate responsibility," few corporations have involved themselves with their employees' child care problems. Probably no more than 5,000 children are currently cared for in centers sponsored by employers, and of the 150 to 200 centers in existence, over half are in hospitals, health care facilities and other non-profit institutions (Roby, 1973: Chapter 14; Women's Bureau, 1970 and 1971). In fact, industry-sponsored day care was much more extensive in earlier periods of our history -- the number of day care centers subsidized by the provisions of the Lanham Act of 1942 was around 3,000. One is led to suspect that arguments about the

appropriate care of children follow the trends of the labor market, rather than the reverse. When employers need more women workers, they manage to find the means to provide child care that at other times they claim they cannot afford. "Indeed, if modern campaigners for extended day care services were to draw on the lessons of history, they might be tempted to pursue their goals by creating World War III, a depression, or some similar catastrophe that would lift the stigma from the working mother and release support for services to her children" (Roby, 1973: 157).

Beyond the vague goal of increasing social responsibility, industry has two reasons for involvement in day care. One is to gain new employees or new kinds of employees; the other is to gain greater retention and low absenteeism among the employees it already has. The pressing need for increasing female labor market participation, for both ideological and economic reasons, is an important factor behind public and private support of day care programs in Israel and China. The United States does not have such an obvious need -- one thing that makes the struggle of women's organizations for expanded day care services so difficult now is that their demands are occurring in a time of contracting labor market demands in many crucial areas.

One conclusion of a 1973 study of employer practices in New York is that: "The time is not propitious in New York City to expect that employers will consider sponsorship of child care programs. A time of more full employment may kindle this interest" (Women's Bureau, 1973a: 11).

The success of employer child care programs so far is difficult to evaluate, since few have collected data on their results.(Women's

Bureau, 1970 and 1971, for example, identify and describe ongoing services without reporting on the response to the services offered.) In recent years, almost as many company-based centers have closed as opened, apparently because commuter-mothers find the transportation of young children too difficult. A few employers, including the Ford Foundation, subsidize parents for day care and the parents make their own arrangements (Joan Carroll, personal communication).

American Telephone and Telegraph Company is one of the few large corporations which is gathering data on its own day care program, initiated in 1971. The results are not yet published, but preliminary findings indicate that day care centers do cut down on employee tardiness but not necessarily on absenteeism -- children in day care centers are more prone to illness than children cared for at home, because of the contact with so many other children, and when a child is ill, parents who commute a fairly great distance, are likely to extend an absence for several days to care for him (Charles Sherard, personal communication).

In addition to providing or subsidizing day care for its own employees, private industry has also become involved in the selling of child care services. Several companies are attempting to contract with corporations and groups of industries, industrial parks, and government agencies to manage centers for a fee or a percent of operating costs. The most widely publicized and controversial method of operation is the franchise:

> Corporations sell facilities, name, advertising, "training" and program materials to individuals or small groups who operate their own centers. The operators pay an annual fee, usually six per cent of the operating costs, to the franchising corporations for continuing use of the name and other central services, such as training, advertising, marketing materials, etc. There are many misgivings about franchises; those educators who think that franchised day care cannot work, fear that cutting costs to increase profits means reducing personnel. Certainly personnel is the major cost of day care, and cutting may reduce the quality of service. Studies have shown that day care shows a relatively low profit margin. Two large corporations' in-house study concluded that "good" day care services could not be sold at a profit.(Day Care Consultation Service, Ibid.: 12).

Besides being unable so far to show a very substantial profit, franchisers have yet to show that they can provide care above the custodial level. As the author of a two-year study for the Child Welfare League of America put it, "the kind of child care provided in franchised centers ranged from damaging to fair" (William Pierce, quoted in the Wall Street Journal, November 27, 1972. See also Featherstone, 1970).

In sum, only a very small proportion of the major United States employers have assumed any responsibility for child care, and there is no existing program which is both feasible for the employer and truly responsive to the needs of working parents and their children.

The discussion of government and private industry involvement in child care does not begin to complete our analysis of the child care system. Among other important components or roles which I did not have time to study more than superficially are:

- the role of labor unions. While labor unions have been innovative in providing many kinds of social services to their workers, they seem to have been strangely innactive in the area of day care.

Amalgamated Clothing Workers of America is the one union we have located, which has attempted to provide quality day care (Joyce Miller, personal communication).

- the child advocate. A new role which has been proposed by observers of the child care system would be a kind of spokesman for children, who would lobby for needed resources and services and would investigate and file suit on behalf of children when it seems that their legal rights are jeopardized. A recent class action filed in a New York court, against all of the public and private child welfare agencies of the city and their chief administrators, argued that the entire system of child welfare services is unconstitutional, since the city funds and relies upon systems permeated by religious and racial discrimination, lacking adequate services for the children most in need of care, and placing such children in detention homes and other institutions in violation of their right not to be subjected to cruel and unusual punishment (Shirley Wilder et al. vs. Jule Sugarman et al.). Research and legal action is also being planned by Marian Wright Edelman, creator of the Children's Defense Fund, to investigate the more than 1.5 million school-age children who are not enrolled in public or private schools.

- the role of mass media. In both Israel and Sweden, I met with producers of educational television programs, who are committed to a role for television in the lives of children, which is quite different from the mindless, mechanical babysitter it has become for many American children. In both countries, TV is available only a few hours a day (so that Israeli and Swedish children cannot yet spend more hours in front of a television set than they do in school), and the educational channel is often the only one. Besides producing a series of programs aired during the hours most day care centers and nurseries are open, both countries have developed some sophisticated substantive courses for use in elementary, secondary, and college classrooms (the foreign language programs are among the most impressive). Finally, both countries have examined the possibility of importing the American Sesame Street programs, and have rejected the idea (Israel did do a trial run of some Sesame Street programs translated into Hebrew, which were not very successful), on the grounds that the values and life styles presented in the program were contrary to the ones these societies wished to inculcate in their own children (interviews with Frederic Fleisher and other members of the TRU committee; interview with Jaacov Lorberbaum).

Society and its child care system. It should be clear from much in the preceding sections that the society in which a child is raised itself affects the kind of care he will receive. During the past year, I have given some thought to what characteristics of societies as total systems have the most important effects upon children and the child care system. In Figure 2 I have presented a preliminary set of characteristics with my own comments on the four societies with respect to each characteristic.

Each of the countries I studied has serious unresolved problems about the care of young children. Only China seems not to have a critical shortage of caretakers (and this may not last when the present generation of grandmothers passes on, a phenomenon which has occurred in other societies). However the forms in which the problems manifest themselves are distinct to each society. Only Israel has the masses of new immigrants coming from such diverse backgrounds, which require a strong focus upon programs for assimilation. Perhaps because of the kind of constant crisis atmosphere in which Israelis live, they have been the most inventive about social programs for children (to list just a few: the kibbutz children's home, Youth Aliya and children's villages, boarding schools for culturally disadvantaged gifted students, home intervention projects using mothers and neighborhood aides to encourage cognitive skills in preschool children, Korath Gag (a temporary foster-placement program to remove children from immigrant camps during especially severe winters), and vacations for mothers of large families). Indeed there is an improvisatory quality about children's programs in

Figure 2 - Selected Societal Characteristics

Characteristic	United States	Sweden	Israel	China
Population size and rate of growth	Large size Low and declining rate of growth	Small size Very low growth rate	Small size Increasing growth rate caused by relatively high birth rate and unusually high rate of in-migration	Large size High growth rate currently declining due to intensive national birth control campaign
Racial-ethnic homogeneity vs. heterogeneity	Racial-ethnic and cultural pluralism, related to SES differentiation	Very homogeneous	Ethnically heterogeneous, with large SES gaps between Jewish and non-Jewish sub-groups, and betw-een European and Oriental origin	Very homogeneous, with a few small "national minorities"
Extent of urbanization	High	One of the world's most urbanized societies	Some large cities, but large rural population and government policy of decentralization for development or defense purposes	Some large cities but still rural predominance
Standard of living	Very high	Very high	A developing rather than developed country with rising standard of living	Low but rising substantially
Degree of consensus	Low.Pluralistic society with cleavages based on race, SES, sex and age	High on general policy issues	High in times of emergency (e.g., war), considerably lower in the inter-vals between crises	Very high

Figure 2 (continued)

Characteristic	United States	Sweden	Israel	China
Degree of commitment to the society	Dangerously low	Medium	High especially in times of crisis	Very high
Individual or group orientation	Highly individualistic and competitive. Importance of doing one's own thing	Individualistic but emphasis upon cooperation rather than competitive aggressiveness in human relations	Aggressive, especially in times of crisis	Group orientation. Needs of society put ahead of personal interests. High level of within-society cooperativeness. Aggressiveness toward outside world
View of man and society	Importance of individual happiness and self-development. Conflict between the values of success via individual achievement and equal opportunity	Individuals and society share responsibility for caring for all members of society. Social problems can be resolved by rational analysis and a comprehensive program of social benefits (Sweden "the promised land of the committee of inquiry")	Israel is a land of miracles where anything can happen. It will all turn out OK	Man is malleable and perfectable. "Serve the people." Identificat with physical labor and laborers

Israel that is rather refreshing, as is the evident concern for every human life that the society as a whole displays. The problem, of course, is coordinating the proliferation of programs, public and private, which have sprung from the Israeli imagination. One analysis concludes rather gloomily that "it is rather difficult, at present, to envisage the situation in which the particularistic interests of various ministries, departments, and organizations will cease to circumvent coordination and integration" (Roby, 1973: 428).

Unlike Israel, Sweden has the advantage of having only one language, no national minorities, relatively small status differences between societal members, and the absence of war and other major national emergencies. Major concerns are how to revise and extend a system of social benefits so as to wipe out remaining pockets of need (including the unmet need for day care places and service to children who are mistreated), and to achieve even higher levels of equality. Sweden has probably gone as far as any nation in the world in envisioning settings for human beings that cut across age and class boundaries and which nurture the cooperativeness and non-aggression which are highly valued by Swedes (e.g., the brother-sister daghems which contain children of a relatively broad age range and allow children from the same family to attend together, and experiments with neighborhood co-ops for all ages, as opposed to physically separated day care centers).

By comparison to Israel, Sweden and nearly all socialist states, where women work outside the home as a matter of course, the United States

has not managed to break free from guilt and ambivilence about the working mother or about any kind of child care arrangements outside the home except for very poor children. We have thus been slow to develop the kinds of social inventions which would make the relationships between children and adults and between men and women less stressful. Perhaps the most disturbing thing about the child care system in this country is how impoverished the interpersonal lives of many American children really are. Children not only need environments that meet minimum standards of health and safety -- they are also highly social beings who need the attention of interested adults and the company, under appropriate adult supervision, of friends. A child development specialist asked to identify the greatest hazard facing young children today in our city centers and suburbs replied "loneliness" (Roby, 1973: 13).

Conclusions

The most general conclusion that can be drawn about the child care system, in this country and elsewhere, is that it is not providing enough of the kinds of care children need most. Roby argues that child care in America is a non-system. I think a more accurate conceptualization is that it is a system which is out of balance, in which there is a substantial gap between the needs of children and the ability and/or willingness of the system to provide these needs.

A second conclusion is that children are best served in systems in which responsibility is relatively diffused. The environment of many American children, with its isolation of the mother and child, is hardly conducive to intellectual or social growth, and the burden of being solely responsible for raising children is more than many parents can bear (and probably explains the rejection of parenthood among growing numbers of young people).

In this country especially, there seem to be discontinuities between our values and our behavior with respect to children. Several logical possibilities exist concerning the relationship between values and behavior: a) that we actually value children less than we used to, and therefore our neglect of them is consistent; b) that we value children as much as ever (though perhaps for different reasons) but that our institutional arrangements do not allow us to care for them in a way consistent with our values; c) that we value children but we now value other things more (especially self-development), and this interferes with our behaving responsibly toward children. Which if any of the above models most closely fits the American situation is unknown with currently available data.

One's choice of strategy for reform of the child care system depends upon a variety of factors, including personal bias and political realities as well as objective evaluation of how to maximize children's development. The one kind of strategy that seems doomed to failure is one based upon large numbers of women returning to the home and full-time motherhood. This still leaves a great number of different strategic approaches, of which the relative merits and feasibility are largely untested. Some of the alternative strategies suggested in current debates on child care are: greater public investment; greater involvement by corporations, agencies and labor unions as employers; new kinds of family, neighborhood and community arrangements which involve greater sharing of the pleasures and perils of childrearing; getting more adults involved in part-time relationships with children (including adults not related by blood); pushing for greater specialization and professionalization of the caretaker role -- or the reverse, encouraging the identification of people with an affinity for working with children and providing them with the minimum training needed; and planning a comprehensive set of centers and services for children (like air conditioning units, day care seems to function better when it is built into the system from the beginning).

What are the major research priorities? In my own continuation of the work begun in this project, with support from the Russell Sage Foundation, I plan to address the following kinds of "unknowns."

1. We still know very little about people's reasons for wanting -- or not wanting -- children. Nor do we know what kinds of child care

arrangements they would choose if they had knowledge of and access to a wide range of choices;

2. We still do not know enough about what children do all day. As Bronfenbrenner puts it, little is known about "where, how, and with whom children spend their waking hours and what may be the impact of these experiences on the development of the child as an individual and as a member of society" (Bronfenbrenner, 1970: 164).

3. We have not figured out a way to balance the expectations and obligations of the major roles in the system, so that the improvement of one role (e.g., the mother) is not at the expense of another (the child).

4. We lack the social inventions which would allow responsible child care in a society in which fewer people are willing to devote large amounts of time to children.

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Appendix A - Informants

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Appendix B

Some Notes on Research Methodology

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The objective of this exploratory study was to understand how the child care system functioned in several diverse societies. Thus, my research strategy was to combine gathering a variety of different kinds of empirical data with a verstehen kind of conceptual activity. I used the following modes of data collection:

collection of available data, both statistical data and published monographs and reports. For each society, I tried to find empirical indicators which could be compared across societies (e.g., population age distributions, the major types of child care arrangements, and the number and proportion of children in each);

interviews with a substantial number of "experts," from government officials and other creators and administrators of children's policy and programs, to educators to scholars conducting research on children. Many of these were relatively formal interviews, with a prepared list of questions, and lasting from one to three hours. A few were relatively brief telephone conversations simply to obtain information or references, but more were long, often informal conversations lasting over several days (as in the case of most of my kibbutz visits) or even throughout my stay in the country (as in the case of several colleagues at the Hebrew University);

field visits to day care centers, schools and special settings for children (such as kibbutz children's homes). In each case I tried to arrange to observe settings which practitioners considered the "best" their society had to offer (e.g., the new "brother-sister daghems in

Stockholm) as well as the more ordinary ones. The major problem here was the conflict between comprehensiveness and depth -- that is, should I try to see at least one of every major type of child care facility or sample a few in quality. What I ultimately did was something in between. For example, I did spend one day visiting four different gans in the Jerusalem area operated by the same women's voluntary organization, which allowed me to see what features were idiosyncratic to a particular center as opposed to those which were characteristic of the program as a whole. I was accompanied on all my visits by an interpreter (in Israel, I also received some coaching in elementary Hebrew, so that by the end of my stay, I could understand the general subject of some children's conversations and could ask them simple questions).

In addition to observations arranged by appointment where I interviewed the staff of the facility as well as observed the children, I spent substantial blocks of time in school yards, parks, department stores, museums, and other settings where children's behavior and their interaction with each other and with adults could be unobtrusively observed. In Jerusalem, I also did some walking tours of selected residential neighborhoods, noting the patterns of informal "child-minding" by parents and metapelots and in neighborhood day care homes;

special meetings and conferences. Besides the appointments set up for me, I was always on the lookout for conferences and meetings which might provide insights into the society in general and my project in particular (e.g., in Israel, I attended a conference on recent changes in immigration patterns, a staff meeting of the researchers at

Oranim (the teacher training college for the kibbutz movement); and a meeting of the mayor and other officials of a development town.

Finally, in the course of my own teaching and lecturing, I was able to obtain information about data sources and potential informants (e.g., in Sweden, I lectured on my ongoing research to seminars that included researchers and government officials; both of my seminars at Hebrew University contained students who had been raised on kibbutzim, and I held several informal group interviews about their personal experiences in kibbutzim).

I had originally planned to spend a substantial portion of my time in analysis of data from large national surveys containing items on child rearing, and I did investigate any possible survey resources that came to my attention. I did some preliminary work with a survey of 15,000 Swedish respondents born in 1953, who were studied at regular intervals throughout their childhood and adolescence. However, these data have not yet been used extensively; the spelling out of the actual runs has taken longer than predicted; and the results are not yet available. In Israel, I spent several days familiarizing myself with a large survey, conducted by the kibbutz federations, of all "second-generation" members, but decided that the excessive length of the questionnaire and the biased wording of a number of questions precluded my use of the data. An extensive survey of Israel school children, modeled after the Coleman Report, is currently under way, but was not far enough along for me to use.

My impression at this point is that there are no large data pools on the questions of child care systems which seem most important to me.

My future research plans call for including a few questions of my own choice in a regular survey conducted by NORC or some other survey research organization rather than going through the lengthy process of getting runs from available studies which did not really focus upon my areas of interest (and which also raise some serious questions of cross-cultural comparability).

Several methodological problems arose during the year which seem especially characteristic of research with this kind of broad focus. One is the great need for more bridging between the various disciplines that have something to say about child care. Among the fields which I think should be included in any comprehensive research program are: demography, especially as it explains trends in fertility and birth rates and changes in household structure; child development, which raises important questions about the developmental needs of children and the effects of different kinds of environments on their welfare; history, which provides a sense of the development of patterns of caretaking over time; economics, which should help in the development of models for systems analysis of the child care system and provide insight into the factors contributing to the relative "efficiency" of alternative modes of care; and radical sociology, in particular feminist analyses of family structure and interpersonal relations. A second kind of research problem is dealing with the reluctance of many people, especially those involved in child care in a practical way, to cooperate with research efforts. (As one informant put it, she didn't put much stock in people doing yet more research about day care problems, and that the most helpful thing funding agencies could do

would be to contribute more to already existing day care programs.) The need for establishing good working relationships between researchers and people who are providing day care services has probably been underestimated.

A final comment on my year's experience is my strong feeling that researchers who work in other societies need to talk less and listen more. I was especially aware in Israel of the number of outside "experts" who arrived for brief tours and who immediately began dispensing opinions and advice without any real understanding of the complexity of Israeli society. I am also convinced that unobtrusive informal observation provides insights that cannot be obtained in any other way. To cite only one example, it was only after I had spent time in a number of different day care centers that I began to notice the numbers of mothers who were competing for the few places available, and the real despair of those who could not obtain places -- a situation which is not revealed in the available reports and which might not have been admitted by most of my interviewees unless I specifically asked about it. In sum, certain patterns in the child care system simply will not be revealed (the system members may not even be aware of them) until one comes to experience, even if indirectly, what life is like for a member of a given society.